

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Hefner, please.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, this bill sets the tax rates for the coming fiscal year. The original bill called for leaving the rates the way they were at 3.5 percent sales tax and 19 percent state income tax rates. The committee amendment leaves the sales tax rate the way it is and raises the state income tax rate to 20 percent. The Revenue Committee voted this committee amendment out by a 6 to 1 vote and I voted against advancement because I felt that we would be sending the wrong signal to this body. I figured that we should wait or advance the bill as it was originally drafted until all the appropriation bills were debated and on Final Reading. I think the Revenue Committee acted hastily. I think maybe we even panicked a little bit. And so I would like to recommend to this body that we reject the committee amendment, advance the bill to Select File, leave it sit on Select File until we have debated the appropriation bills. I feel that we will be through debating the appropriation bills in another day or so. Is that right, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NICHOL: Well, I hope so.

SENATOR HEFNER: Okay, he says he hopes so. But I want to say to this body, I think that we can do it. I think we can cut the budget enough so that we will not have to raise the tax rates this year. If you have any questions, I would be real happy to answer them.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Marsh, then Senator Sieck.

SENATOR MARSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislature, I think the motion has to be made to accept the committee amendments and then I will urge you to vote against it and I think that is the way we need to make the motion. I feel that we are not ready to pick that specific figure and there is little point in adding an amendment now until we do know what the correct figure is. So I would urge you to vote red on the committee amendments until such time as we have some firm figures on the Appropriations Committee figures. I also would urge you to get it moved over to Select File just as soon as we can so that we have everything in place. We only have seven days after today and we are running out of time. We can't afford to waste time on this particular issue, in my estimation. Thank you,